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**The Reception of Shakespearean Festival at the
National Theatre in Prague during the Great War**

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Prohlašuji, že jsem práci zpracovala samostatně a použila jen uvedených
pramenů a literatury.

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1 INTRODUCTION

The bachelor's thesis is concerned with the Shakespearean Festival at the National Theatre in Prague in 1916, which was a festival to commemorate the 300th anniversary of Shakespeare's decease. In view of the fact that the festival took place during the Great War, and Bohemia was at that time trying to become independent, the festival, particularly its programme, attracted attention of the censors. The thesis sets as its aim to concentrate on the reception of the festival.

The objective is to go over the reviews in period and also in latter periodicals and to reflect the reception of the journalists and critics considering the fact of active censorship.

The bachelor's thesis consists of five chapters further divided into subchapters. The first chapter is in fact an introduction to the study and there is the content of the subsequent chapters in outline. The second chapter is theoretical and provides information about historical facts and the events causing the Great War as well as it outlines Bohemian Realia and Czech Resistance with its spearhead Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk. The goal of the third chapter is to present the personage of William Shakespeare, his work and particularly his personality cult in Bohemia. In the closing of the chapter there is the festival opening lecture of F.X.Šalda further analysed. The fourth chapter is rather practical than theoretical. It is focused on the very festival and the reception of it in various periodicals.

To accomplish the objectives of this thesis, the historical events causing the Great War, as well as Shakespeare's life and work are described. To achieve the aim of the practical part, the periodicals, deposited in the Archive of the National Theatre, are researched.

At the very end of the thesis a short conclusion with the findings of the thesis will be drawn.

2 THE WORLD BEFORE AND DURING THE GREAT WAR

2.1 Events leading towards the Great War

The turning point in the evolution towards war is searched in the emergence of an alliance of different powers. The first power who contributed to create the first alliance, which then became the backbone of the Triple Alliance, was the German chancellor Otto von Bismarck. It was a Treaty between the German Empire and Austria-Hungary signed in October 1879. This alliance was supposed to provide the German Empire postponement of possible future jeopardy of international isolation and it was also supposed to keep Habsburg monarchy away from the Western powers and prevent it from anything else but Berlin orientation, and thus actually affect the whole Central European development. [1]

This agreement has become for both sides a bond linking them to the bitter end. In Austria-Hungary it supported the dualism and the influence of the Hungarian nobility, it was practically against changes in its internal structure. At the German Foreign Bureau they soon founded "Files about Czechs" in which ones they monitored the development of the Czech political scene, particularly its efforts to establish their own state within the monarchy. [2]

"Slavic state between Bavaria and Silesia would be definitely uncomfortable for us," used to say Bismarck. (translation mine) [3] And he informed Vienna, that Berlin would not accept any "Federalist-Slavic Austria." [4]

That was at a time when his policy of alliance expanded to Italy. In local political circles prevailed strong anti-French sentiment, due to Tunis annexation to France (and not to Italy). In addition, the proposal guarantee treaty appealed very much to Austria-Hungary because so far they had not had a very good relationship. And so, in 1882 the Triple Alliance was established, although Germany and Austria-Hungary considered this partnership rather politically than militarily because they thought of Italy as an unequal military partner. [5]

On the other side there were France and Russia, who both felt certain international isolation and so as a response to the Triple Alliance, they signed an agreement in 1891, also known as the Franco-Russian Alliance or Russo-French Alliance. Thirteen years later, in 1904, Great Britain and France signed an agreement, later called the Entente cordiale [6] (it means 'cordial agreement' in French), which defined the colonial interests and its aim was also a protection against possible danger from Germany.

Britain also expressed its interest in an agreement with Russia, which was reciprocated in St. Petersburg: the defeat in the war with Japan in 1904-1905 had shaken Russia very hard, so it strenuously looked for international support. [7]

Joint agreement of 1907 completed the British-French-Russian bloc headed Triple Entente against the Triple Alliance. [8] Triple Alliance was internally weakened by the Franco-Italian agreement of 1902, committing both sides to neutrality in case that it is directly or indirectly attacked by one or more powers. [9]

At the beginning of the new century, the world felt several crises that would in retrospect might seem like a huge harbinger of impending disaster. The largest of these was the war in 1911, when Turkey was invaded by Italy and soon after also by the Balkan states, Bulgaria, Serbia, Montenegro and Greece. The war ended with the victory of Italy relatively quickly. In mid-1913, to top it all, the Balkan bloc fell apart and Serbia bolstered up its power, which Austria-Hungary did not like, because it had been always thinking of its 'domesticating'. Even before that the disintegration of the Balkan bloc in 1913, Austria-Hungary announced in 1908 the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, supported by England and Germany, but heavily criticized by Russia and the Kingdom of Serbia. [10]

The annexation was basically a premonition of that Great War. The occupied country was in charge of the Austria-Hungarian Ministry of

Finance. [11] It also strove mightily to improve the Bosnian economy, in which it also partly succeeded.

Hatred for Bosnian' occupiers nevertheless continued. Various secret organizations, in most cases comprised by youth, were established. Gavrilo Princip, a student and a member of one of them, particularly the organization Young Bosnia, shot on 28th June 1914 in Sarajevo the Austria-Hungarian heir to the throne and “dashed all hopes that the 20th century will be the age of understanding” (translation mine) [12]

2.2 The Sarajevo assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand and the subsequent ultimatum and mobilization

Princip's victim, the successor to the Habsburg throne, Archduke Franz Ferdinand d'Este and his wife Sophie were on the crucial 28th June 1914 in Bosnian Sarajevo to see military maneuvers. Already in the beginning of June, the Serbian ambassador in Austria Jovan Jovanović warned his friend, the Austrian Minister Bilinsky that the followers path may induce massive demonstrations of Bosnian youth. Nevertheless, all threats had been underestimated and warnings had been ignored. [13]

Archduke Ferdinand was born as the eldest son of Archduke Karl Ludwig, brother of Emperor Francis Joseph. In 1889, when Ferdinand was 26 years old, his cousin Crown Prince Rudolf committed a suicide, and thus his father became the first in line to the throne. [14] However, he renounced the throne almost immediately in favour of Franz Ferdinand [15] and died of typhoid fever seven years later.

Since then he was raised as the future emperor. “He was frequently and rapidly promoted, given the rank of lieutenant at age fourteen, captain at twenty-two, colonel at twenty-seven, and major general at thirty-one.” [16]

In 1913, as the successor to the throne, he had been appointed inspector general of all the armed forces of Austria-Hungary, which ironically included presumed command during wartime.

Franz Ferdinand was a modern man. He knew that the Empire necessarily needs to be rebuilt. [17] During old Emperor Francis Joseph's reign, the whole Empire's political structure wilted. Franz wanted to galvanize the empire and consolidate its power. An important point in his mind was an end to dualism, which he considered to be ineffective. If he failed in the decomposition of the dualism, he would try to establish a three-member Federation. [18] Until now Czech people mistakenly think that the third privileged State would have been Bohemia, but it is a mistake - Franz Ferdinand thought of creating a Greater Croatia, which, as he supposed, would make the Empire attractive for all the Yugoslavs.

Czech political scene would thus definitely not be on his side. Only the nobility sympathized in Bohemia with Franz Ferdinand, among others Prince Karl Schwarzenberg or Count Ottokar Czernin, who were his most significant political supporters. [19]

As the most acceptable option Ferdinand considered probably a combination of a united empire with the autonomy of its nations. [20] The successor to the throne wanted to settle the Empire first, he did not want any war. Despite all his military ranks he did not belong to Austrian War side. Only his tragic death served the war.

Austria-Hungary blamed Serbia for the murder and wanted to invade it. However, they were scared of Russia, Serbia's powerful ally, so they did not hesitate to intervene. First they needed assurance from Germany and its leader Kaiser Wilhelm and then they would be prepared to fight against Serbia and Russia alongside. On 4th of July 1914 Kaiser Wilhelm agreed and nineteen days after, on 23rd July, Austria-Hungary issued an ultimatum to Serbia. [21]

Serbia had made many concessions and accepted all the terms of the ultimatum but one, however in Vienna – where the headquarters of

the Habsburg Empire was located - it did not entirely satisfied the government and so “on July 28, Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia, and the tenuous peace between Europe's great powers collapsed. Within a week, Russia, Belgium, France, Great Britain and Serbia had lined up against Austria-Hungary and Germany, and World War I had begun.” [22]

It was exactly one month after the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife in Sarajevo. It was the middle of summer and people had no idea that a war was approaching them. Mobilization caused massive homecoming of Czech tourists from their holidays, mostly from Germany and Italy. [23] Posters with ordinance of mobilization appeared on all public places. Russia mobilized on 30th July, two days after, on 1st August France and Germany, which also declared war on Russia, and finally Britain on 5th August. And so the Great War, without Italy which surprisingly declared a policy of neutrality, would begin. [24]

2.3 Socio-political background in Bohemia

The years of War deeply marked the life of Czech society. People did not want to go to war, they had no reason, and, on the contrary they felt a certain affinity with the official enemies, such as Serbia or Russia. On 26th July on St. Anne's Feast Day, while enlisting they sang “Red scarf revolve around, we are going to fight a Serbian and we do not know why...” (translation mine) [25] People were indeed surrounded by sadness and fears, but on the other hand it was generally assumed that the war would not be very long.

During the war, the real incomes of the population drastically decreased. Inflation was huge, salaries slashed in all branches up to a quarter of their real value or even lesser. The war also severely affected the Czech lands (and not only them) in terms of food. As a result of the massive enlistment of the farmers Czechs did not have what to eat and what to produce from. The most important raw materials - wheat, rye and even corn flour - were rationed, as well as raw sugar, bread or butter. The

people did not win anyway, because even the goods to which they were theoretically entitled, for exchange their ration cards, were often unavailable. [26]

A similar problem as in the case of food, was with charcoal. Charcoal was allocated to households for cooking and heating their homes. The external lighting of theatres, shops, cafes and pubs was completely forbidden. Moreover, in 1916, Germany together with Austria-Hungary introduced as it is called summer time, nowadays also known as Daylight Saving Time. During the war there was a lack of everything, and because of that, there were spreading various types of offences. Smuggling and usury were rather rampant. Traders secretly concealed their supplies of grain and other foods, they overcharged goods, traded illegally and so on. What was for the Czech countries very typical during the war, was the common hunger. Kitchens, as they were called, were put into operation in all major cities, some of them ran in the open air. The first Prague Kitchen was established on 14th August, 1916 U Vejvodů and for start they cooked 500 meals per day. [27]

Supplying and allocation of resources, whether grain or meat, was within the whole monarchy very uneven and unfair. The Czech lands and particularly Bohemia in terms of export "their" food to other parts of the monarchy highly exceeded the Cisleithanian¹ average. Even that might have caused an attitude turnaround that occurred in Bohemia during the war and changed its relationship with the monarchy. [28]

The fact that most of men went to the battlefield to fight, changed also the role of women in society. In this situation, they had been forced into various professions that were previously exclusively male, such as was plowing or controlling farming machines. It might be said, with a little exaggeration, that the war, in fact, helped accelerate the women's emancipation. Even their role in the family had changed, they had to in many ways deputize their spouses. Especially in rural areas, children

¹Name of the Austrian part of Austria-Hungary

were increasingly excused from school and went to help their mothers on the fields instead. In general, primary school teachers experienced a major decline due to their large-scale recruiting to battlefronts. The few that remained had the task to cultivate patriotism in children, The days of celebrations of royal anniversaries or even military success were declared as school holiday. [29]

Pupils and not only them, were prohibited from wearing or using the Slavic tricolor, a combination of red, blue and white. Particularly for this purpose various regulations and prohibitions were issued. "Varnishers were not allowed to use the three colours, and so the Prague street shingles from pre-war period had to be repainted on two-coloured..." (translation mine) [30]

Everyday reality was also represented by a variety of collections. Everything was widely collected and bought up - from ferrous metals, bells and the organ to the hen's dung to produce shoes. The most commonly held collections were material collection in support of the army. Among the most demanded items at these events belonged chocolate, sugar, wine, or even cigarettes, lighters and vacuum bottles. Other public collection was also the Collection for the Red Cross to which, however, the Czechs did not contribute much - compared to 2,000,000 crowns from the Germans, the Czechs donated only 100,000 crowns. [31]

A largely discussed subject related to the war is the decline of moral values, distortion of traditional social relations and the growth of criminality. While it is true that the number of thefts increased during the war, but on the other hand it is also a fact that the number of violent offenses, especially murders, had dropped dramatically. Among women, naturally, also increased crime and prostitution broadly expanded as well, especially when there were troops accommodated in Czech towns. [32]

However, it is not right to think that functioning of the country during the war entirely suspended. Particularly in Prague and in other major cities visiting theatre performances and restaurants with dancing

remained very popular and people were having a rest in the newly opened cafés.

2.3.1 The censorship

The censorship, which strongly influenced the new situation after the outbreak of War is also worth mentioning. Tracing War Office was in charge of managing the war censorship. It fulfilled the following tasks: “1) press censorship - a) political censorship (led by civilian authorities) - b) military censorship (led by officers); 2) Letter censorship; 3) telegraph censorship. The supreme authority of the military censorship for the entire monarchy was The Military Press Tent (K. u K. Kriegspressequartier). Civil Censorship has been delegated to the Ministry of Justice. Censorship of periodicals ran through the public prosecutor, who was supposed to work in partnership with police chiefs, police commissioners and other government authorities.” (translation mine) [33]

The foreign press was precisely censored and particularly from enemy states it would be banned altogether. Although systematic analysis of censorship is missing, [34] it is clear that censorship prevailed mainly against the Czech press. Newspapers in Bohemia were obliged to submit daily press 3 hours before release. Ministry of Interior ordered censors to heed the support of patriotic spirit, and to suppress nationalist and social strifes. Among the taboo topics that were not supposed to appear in periodicals during the war were military failures, imperfect supply, breach of the economy and national controversy. [35]

2.3.2 Czech Resistance

Already during the first days and weeks of the War, various conspiratorial groups began to form in Bohemia which carried out the resistance movement against the Austro-Hungarian Empire. That led to their persecution and by the end of the first year of the war there were 950 people arrested for political offenses, of which 704 were referred to military courts. [36]

These secret groups had at their beginning primarily news and organizational character. The first such group was, in fact, a group of members of the Young Czech Party gathered and led by Karel Kramář. Thanks to strong representation of their supporters among Czech officials, they obtained information from both the police and official background as well as from Vienna, and thanks to Russian journalist Svátkovsky also from Russia. [37]

The Young Czech Party's leader Kramář had just before the War devised pro-Russian postwar division of the Slavic countries, formation of the as it is called Slavic empire, in which the Russian Czar would be also Czech and Polish king and where would Bulgaria, Serbia and Montenegro also belong. [38]

A slightly different vision of the Czech lands in the future had the Group of Realists led by T.G. Masaryk. Soon after the War they began outlining the first project of the independent Czechoslovak state, which was supposed to merge the historical Czech lands with the Slavic regions of Hungary, today's Slovakia. The intended Czechoslovak State should have been a kingdom within the Habsburg Empire. The project was based on the assumption that Germany and Austria-Hungary would have been defeated, to which not only Kramář's lauded Russia would have made a contribution, but all the Triple Entente states, especially Britain. Masaryk had already been in touch with Britain, thanks to secret liaisons with a British journalist Wickham Steed, Robert Seton-Watson and others. [39]

Resistance against Austria-Hungary could only be carried out abroad. Within Austria-Hungary, the political life had ebbed away and many politicians were persecuted, while the power of military institutions grew constantly. Masaryk went abroad in the late 1914, after consulting it with several like-minded politicians who then kept in touch with him and formed the basis of Czech domestic resistance, a group called Mafia [Maffie]. [40]

Masaryk found abroad support primarily in Czechs and Slovak compatriot associations. In 1915, on the occasion of the anniversary of 500 years since the Burning of Master John Huss [Jan Hus], he spoke in Zurich in public. During his speech Masaryk publicly declared resistance to the Habsburg monarchy. [41] According to Kvaček, Masaryk stated in the Assembly Hall in Geneva (after the war there dwelt League of Nations for a long time) that: "Every Czech ... must decide either for the reformation or against the reformation, for the Czech idea or for the idea of Austria, the institution of the Counter-Reformation and reaction." (translation mine) [42]

In Bohemia the authorities were certainly aware of the danger associated with the domestic resistance, which logically resulted in arresting the main character of domestic resistance Karel Kramář on 21st May 1915. Approximately two months later followed him Alois Rašín and Vincent Červinka, editor of the National Sheets (a Bohemian newspaper). They were immediately transported to Vienna, where there were on 3rd June 1916, by military court, delivered a verdict of death penalty, which on 20th November 1916 the Supreme Court upheld. However, the Austro-Hungarian Emperor Francis Josef died the day after, so the sentence was not immediately executed, and in 1917 the new emperor Charles, in pursuance of an amnesty, commuted the sentence to life imprisonment. [43]

The arrest of Kramář and Rašín meant for Czech domestic resistance, also known as Maffie, an actual blow. Edvard Beneš had feared further repressions, and so he had no choice but secretly leave Austria-Hungary. In early September in 1915 he left the country. On 3rd September he met with Masaryk in Geneva and there they agreed that Masaryk will settle in London and Beneš would carry out a revolt in Paris. There he met the pilot of the French army, Slovak Milan Rastislav Stefanik who had already established some important social contacts in France. [44]

In the fall of 1915 the Czech Foreign Committee was established, whose role was to issue a manifesto and collect as many signatures as possible. The manifesto also contained a detailed description of Czech history, thereby Masaryk justified the legitimacy of the struggle for an independent Czechoslovak State. Yet the Manifesto did not have a great response. In February 1916, the Czech Foreign Committee was renamed the Czechoslovak National Council and ever since it has become the leading and permanent body of the foreign resistance. [45]

The chairman of the Czechoslovak National Council was T. G. Masaryk, vice-chairman Josef Dürich² and one of the members already mentioned, M. R. Štefánik. The Czechoslovak National Council had three major goals. The first one was to unify the Czechoslovak foreign resistance and strengthen its influence in Russia. The second was to build their own army, and the last one was to convince the Triple Entente states that the disintegration of Austria-Hungary is also in their own interest and so get them on their side. [46]

2.3.3 Jaroslav Kvapil and his role in Mafia

After Beneš left abroad, the original Maffie almost fell into pieces. An advocate Přemysl Šámal³ took charge of its reconstruction [Sedivy 178-9]. He invited to Maffie a writer, playwright, and since 1912 also the head of drama in the National Theatre Jaroslav Kvapil, who together with Bedřich Štěpánek, Hajn, Franta and chief Šámal formed a “new five”⁴. [47]

At the turn of 1916 and 1917 Kvapil suggested contacting the parliamentary Czech Union through a kind of manifesto, which called on the Czech deputies in the national assembly to defend national interests, to reflect sentiments of the nation. In case they are not be able to fulfill it,

²A member of parliament for Czech Agrarian Party

³An advocate and politician who later became the first mayor of Prague in 1918

⁴The “old five” was comprised of Karel Kramář, Edvard Beneš, Přemysl Šámal, Josef Scheiner and Alois Rašín [48]

they should rather resign their mandates. The Manifesto was originally meant to be delivered to deputies of the Czech Union privately, but “thanks to an indiscretion the Manifesto was published on 17th May 1917.” (translation mine) [49] By that time Kvapil had already received over 200 signatures, among which were for example Alois Jirásek or Karel Čapek, who, according to Kvaček, received the text with moral relief [50] - “that it is possible to do something to have the slightest bit of interest in the fight and risk, that he can express what we have choked on, in what we hoped for.” (translation mine) [51]

3 SHAKESPEARE'S CONTRIBUTION

3.1 The most important milestones in the life of Shakespeare

William Shakespeare was born on 23rd April, 1564 in the English town of Stratford-upon-Avon. Date 23rd April is, however, merely an approximation, with certainty can only be said the date of Shakespeare's baptism (26th April), mentioned in the local register. It is conceivable that at that time children would be baptised three days after birth. [52]

There is not enough information about the school years of little Shakespeare, nevertheless it is assumable that he spent them in King Edward VI. Grammar School in Stratford, where his teacher was probably a protestant Thomas Jenkins. [53] After his marriage to Anne Hathaway at the end of 1582 and the subsequent arrival of a daughter, Susanna (1583), and twins Hamnet and Judith in 1585, occurred in Shakespeare's life what are today called "lost years". In fact, these years are considered as a great mystery, since not a single document from that period of Shakespeare's life remained. This informational vacuum lasted until the year 1592, when Shakespeare appeared in London as an actor and a playwright. [54]

In London he became a member of the Lord Chamberlain's Men which were actors grouped together under the patronage of Lord Hunsdon Henry Carey. Shakespeare later co-founded a new theatre The Globe where he earned a tenth of the shares, which made him more financially independent and confident. After accession of the new king James I to the throne the Chamberlain's Men they renamed themselves King's Men. In 1613 The Globe burned down. Despite the fact that it was rebuilt within one single year and there were performances taking place anew, by that Shakespeare only confirmed his thoughts of leaving the company, and three years before his death Shakespeare had returned permanently to his family living in his native town of Stratford upon Avon. [55]

In February 1616 the poet's state of health rapidly deteriorated. Although it is not known from which disease he actually suffered because extant medical records date back to the year 1617, it may be said with certainty that Shakespeare did know about the gravity of his illness, because he wrote very consistent last will (and testament), in which he “accurately determined who and under what conditions would inherit his money, land, property, furniture and various objects of daily use.” (translation mine) [56]

Shakespeare probably died on the day of his fifty-second birthday 23rd April 1616. He was buried in Holy Trinity Church in his home town Stratford. [57]

3.2 A brief overview of Shakespeare's work

Shakespeare's works are usually divided into four writing periods with the first one starting around 1590 and the final period ending around 1611.

In the first period Shakespeare drew inspiration from Ancient Greece and Rome. In this period his plays were often comedies and were quite predictable, for example we might mention *The Comedy of Errors* or *The Taming of the Shrew*. He was widely influenced by Christopher Marlowe, who was already during Shakespeare's life considered his major literary rival. [58]

The second period, which is believed to last approximately between years 1594 and 1600, is characterized by some kind of maturity of authorial style by losing excessive obviousness. At this point Shakespeare makes experiments with blending genres of comedy and tragedy, as a result there are plays such as *The Merchant of Venice* or *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. [59]

During the third period Shakespeare wrote some of his most acclaimed plays, in most cases tragedies, such as *Othello*, *King Lear* or *Hamlet*. At that time he was probably still suffering from losing his only

son, who died at age of eleven years in 1596, which means that even in his comedies from that time we may notice his sorrows. [60]

In the final period which started in 1608 it seemed that Shakespeare reflected on what he achieved in his professional life and he probably came to terms with the idea of leaving. Plays of this period are strongly influenced by his earlier plays - as an example, consider *The Winter's Tale*, where can be found apparent traces of inspiration from *Othello*. In *The two noble Kinsmen* Shakespeare grotesquely describes a very old man as if he was already expecting a near end. [61]

3.3 Shakespearean Tradition in Bohemia

Czech theatre is associated with the name of Shakespeare ever since its beginning and since the 18th century Shakespeare's words in the Czech language were heard in the theatres Bouda and U Hybernů, particularly in tragedies *Macbeth* and *Hamlet*. [62]

On the contrary, Otokar Fišer, claims in his critique *K Shakespearovu cyklu* that “A hundred years ago, there was no space for Shakespeare in Czech theatre. Merely rarely excerpts from his work got here in a roundabout way through foreign countries.” (translation mine) [63]

In any case, Fišer also added that all the Czechs could now be proud of the way they embraced Shakespeare in the 20th century and how superbly they paid him tribute by organizing the Shakespearean Festival. [64]

To understand better the Czech obsession with Shakespeare, an article about Shakespeare in a prospectus to the festival could be mentioned. The article was written by Karel Engelmüller who depicted his impact on the contemporary drama quite precisely. He describes Shakespeare's work as a “secular Gospel” (translation mine) [65] for all generations across centuries because according to Engelmüller, Shakespeare's plays signify an absolute top of the theatre. His work has justifiably become a cultural property of all the people around the world.

The Shakespeare's plays are generally, along with the Bible, one of the most widely read and translated literary writings in the world. [66] Moreover, Shakespeare's drama was considered an archetype of the "historical activity of individuals and nations oriented toward the future." (translation mine) [67]

Engelmüller also regards Shakespeare as a very sensitive man, who thought and felt differently than his peers and predecessors. He loved and hated as well, because the genuine life speaks through his characters.. His work denoted a real human, a true human with a natural character. Hereby was the Shakespeare's work according to Engelmüller innovating. [68]

Shakespeare cult in Bohemia revived especially during the time when Jaroslav Kvapil worked as the head of drama of the National Theatre. Yet for several years prior to the Shakespearean festival Kvapil strove to modify the dramaturgical plan of drama so that the works would become a part of the permanent repertoire of the National Theatre. [69] He even made Shakespeare the most popular and the most played playwright on the stage of the National Theatre. Between the years 1883 and 1915 (31 years) Shakespeare was played 562 times, from which 277 performances were held during the eleven-year period when Kvapil worked in the National Theatre. [70]

It was not, however, about the quantity of Shakespeare performances, but primarily about their quality, [71] as the Shakespeare's dramas influenced very strongly and also successfully the development of Czech theatre and they were rightfully regarded as the top of the Czech theatre art. [72] Therefore by organizing Shakespearean Festival the National Theatre did not only give tribute to this genius, but the National Theatre hereby celebrated and demonstrated its long-standing fruitful artistic tradition in that field of activity as well. [73]

3.4 F. X. Šalda's Speech

František Xaver Šalda was a very important and highly regarded literary critic and journalist at that time. Even though he was a Francophile, he was also a great admirer of Shakespeare and his work and therefore it was him who on 27th March 1916 opened the Shakespearean festival by delivering a lecture named Shakespeare's Genius and his work [Génius Shakespearův a jeho tvorba]. Šalda's speech was preceded by Festive Overture from a famous Czech composer Bedřich Smetana, which helped co-create a ceremonial atmosphere of the opening night. He held his almost an hour-long critical apostrophe before a sold-out audience of National Theatre in the second person Singular, as if he was talking directly with Shakespeare. [74] Šalda observes that Shakespeare's drama is not full of metaphysical prejudices as it used to be in ancient tragedy, where the behaviour of the characters was given by their destiny, but in his dramas play a major role character of the characters and their complexity. [75] Thereby according to Šalda, Shakespeare set up as it is called "concrete humanity". [76]

In the lecture Šalda claims that everyone who has ever wondered about Shakespeare's poetic work certainly noticed that his work did not come into this world perfect, but gradually developed, which brings it somewhat closer to the people who also desire to evolve. Shakespeare was not only a poet, but with the fact that inside of him grew an inner person, he became an artist. It is not difficult to notice that his first pieces of work such as comedies *The Comedy of Errors*, *Love's Labour's Lost* or *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, are writings of novices, which observe all the rules too much. How not to feel that poetry was in those times still merely kind of means of support and not an unflagging need? However, after the thirtieth year of Shakespeare's life his characters have acquired except wit and passion also heart, inner nobility and character. [77]

Šalda argues that it is the time of Shakespeare's first maturity, time of faith in life and its power and beauty. For this period are characters of

girls very peculiar – the girls are clear now, internally brave and determined not to make concessions to evil. Although already in this period can be seen signs of melancholia, girls “like glass lenses collect in themselves all the rays of sunshine”. (translation mine) [78]

Šalda asserts that Shakespeare's poetic beings as well as the mood of his output changed abruptly only a few years later. After the thirty-seventh year of Shakespeare's life he hit the deep evil in human heart, evil omnipotent, whose allies are also foolishness, virtue and heroism. The poet has learned how scanty power has a man over himself. Right in that place Shakespeare's art passed through an ordeal and deepened and got wiser. It did not deprive us of the love for remarkable events and details, it preserved its flexibility and versatility. And that is why it was able to pass Shakespeare's great transformation. [79]

Those above mentioned arguments are Šalda's answers to all those why, looking for a tangible reason for the change of Shakespeare's attitude to life. Shakespeare has simply matured, his creative spirit completed. Shakespeare's work is so purely poetic, it even seemed to thy judges that it is rather a work of chaos and whim, rather than a work of human breeding. [80]

Moreover, Šalda notes that in comparison with Voltaire, Europe has considered Shakespeare a barbarian for a long time, the sentiments had not changed for long centuries until the recent times, when people started to regard him properly as a great artist and creator, who with an admirable necessity bases on his unique circumstances and remarkably consistently develops his assumptions. According to Šalda, Shakespeare was the greatest poet of all times. He was a lyricist who showed the world, already 200 years before Verlaine and Heine lived, an “impressionistic or sensually melancholic modern lyricism.” (translation mine) [81] In Shakespeare's dramas the poet conceived a man as a natural phenomenon, even cosmic. Furthermore the playwright thought of the world as a stage and considered all the people to be actors. And how

could remain unnoticed that Shakespeare often created a “stage on stage”? (translation mine) [82] Shakespeare was therefore able to exceptionally portray human characters. Šalda commented on the poet's art in general using words: “To be a poet is to see and report a human-individual in his uniqueness, in what distinguishes him from all others and makes it himself. And you were a poet of the highest power of this word and meaning: all thy people are themselves - unique, occurring only once in the world: they shall never return, they will never be occurring again”. (translation mine) [83]

Obviously, Šalda admired Shakespeare. He considered Shakespeare to be a poet, who had a natural talent to describe characters very realistic and natural. He also pointed out that the quality of Shakespeare's work evolved, but ultimately his work is immortal, because no one can ever surpass him in his humanity.

4 THE SHAKESPEAREAN FESTIVAL

The Shakespearean Festival in the spring of 1916 was a celebration of the 300 years anniversary of Shakespeare's decease in 1616. At first there was widespread embarrassment if it was actually appropriate to celebrate a member of a hostile power. However, the proponents of the festival eventually prevailed over the sceptics. The Shakespeare Company held a formal meeting in Weimar, during which the professor at the German Charles-Ferdinand University in Prague dr. Brotanek delivered a lecture named Shakespeare a válka [Shakespeare and war], in which he tried to convince the audience that the Shakespeare's output proclaims the necessity of war, and that it ridicules the utopian idea of a state without war. [84]

The National Theatre chose fifteen plays from its repertoire and the whole cycle was arranged and directed by the long-standing admirer of Shakespeare, the director of drama Jaroslav Kvapil. The Festival was open on 27th March with Festive Overture [Slavnostní předehra] by Bedřich Smetana that was conducted by Karel Kovařovic - the then director of opera in the National Theatre – and then followed the aforementioned lecture delivered by F. X. Šalda. At the end of the ceremonial evening, the comedy The Comedy of Errors was performed. The cycle continued until 4th May, when The Winter's Tale concluded it. [85]

4.1 Personalities contributing to the festival the most

As already mentioned above, the person most responsible for the organization of the festival and its course (thus he was, according to Procházka, “the spiritus agens of the whole venture”) [86] was the director of drama department of the National Theatre Jaroslav Kvapil. Not much lesser merit on its clear course had the actors of the National Theatre, who were enthralling the audience with their brilliant performances not only during the Shakespearean Festival.

Eduard Vojan, at that time sixty-three-year, who performed at the festival King Richard, Shylock, Petrucci, Benedick, Hamlet, Lear, Macbeth and Othello should be definitely mentioned. After the festival the administration of the National Theatre even donated him a diamond ring as a proof of gratitude. [87]

Despite the fact that Eduard Vojan portrayed many Shakespearean characters at the festival and has been regarded, after Kvapil, as the second most significant personality of the festival, after all another important actor should not be overlooked - Rudolf Deyl, who, as the only one from the ensemble, portrayed characters in all of the plays performed during the festival. Anna Suchánková followed him with 11 played performances. She was followed by Leopolda Dostálová along with Eduard Vojan, who both identically portrayed 8 characters. Among other actors who also participated on the festival ranked Eduard Kohout, Jiří Steimar, Anna Sedláčková, Eva Vrchlická, Terezie Brzková and Jarmila Kronbauerová.

4.2 The National Theatre as a centre of political resistance

Ever since the theatre was built in 1881 – respectively rebuilt in 1883 – it was a symbol of the Czech nation. When Jaroslav Kvapil became the head of drama of the National Theatre in 1911, it was considered a huge achievement for the Czech resistance because he was an active member of Mafia [Maffie], which was a group that during the Great War fought for Czech Independence. [88] According to contemporary Czech literary historian Procházka, Kvapil “had developed a distinct personal, but also fairly cosmopolitan, style (refined by the influences of Stanislavski, Max Reinhardt, E. G. Craig, and Adolph Appia), which contrasted with the rigid institutional architecture of the theater.” [89]

One of the intentions of the Shakespearean Festival was probably to compare the National Theatre with the Prague German Theatre (that had recently failed to produce a Wagner opera festival) and to demonstrate

the quality level of the Czech performing arts that was comparable with the German. [90]

In the Viennese press emerged voices pointing out that while the Czech National Theatre pompously celebrated genius' memory, the Austrian National Theatre Burgtheater did not prepare anything at all. The Burgtheater management therefore endeavoured to debase the value of the festival by saying it was provincial and that it would not rise to the occasion before the demanding Viennese audience. [91]

Therefore Kvapil suggested that he along with the ensemble of National Theatre will organize a smaller Shakespearean festival for the Czechs living in Vienna, but the inhabitants of Vienna recoiled from the direct proof of the amount of Czech art, and therefore none of the Viennese theatres provided the National Theatre a stage for that purpose. [92]

A literary historian Martin Procházka in his study Czech Resistance argues that the specific problem of really showing the world that Bohemia truly deserved an independence was the National Theatre itself. [93] It was a traditional institution, which did not allow any departure from the conventional acceptance of national values as “sacred gifts”. [94]

All the amendments that the National Theatre had to make to accommodate the Austrian censors and still function in compliance with the institutional purpose of the National Theatre [95] essentially showed, how unsuccessful was the institution of the National Theatre as a centre of political resistance in Bohemia. [96]

On the other hand, the festival demonstrated at least the cultural maturity of the Czech nation, which was on the verge of making its endeavour for national independence successful. [97]

4.3 The programme of the festival

The original purpose of the festival was to embrace sixteen plays during sixteen evenings. It did not happen eventually. Only fifteen plays

were carried out. The sixteenth intended play was a five hour long version of Henry IV, which the Austrian censors found most subversive and so they simply banned it. The main issue was evidently political – the censors reasonably suspected “that people would connect the monumentally staged coronation ceremony with rumors that one of the sons of George V of England would soon become king of the free Czech state.” [98] In other words, the censors banned it because they saw in it a desire of political autonomy, which they naturally could not overlook. In fact, because of the Austrian increasing disinterest in Bohemian political events, the performance did take place later in the year after all. [99]

The cycle was composed so that the work was played in chronological order of Shakespeare's work periods. The cycle consisted of 9 comedies (one of which may be considered rather a fairy tale – The Winter's Tale), 1 historical play and 5 tragedies. Eventually, the play's final order was as follows. During the opening night on Monday 27th March The Comedy of Errors was performed, as it was an easy play that enticed and amused the audience for a start. The Life and Death of King Richard III, that was scheduled as second, took place 3 days later on 30th March. A love tragedy Romeo and Juliet took place on 1st April. It was followed by 7 comedies: A Midsummer Night's Dream was performed on 4th April, The Merchant of Venice was played on 7th April, The Taming of the Shrew 2 days later on 9th April, Much Ado About Nothing took place on 13th April, As You Like It on 15th July, Measure for Measure was played on 17th April and an ultimate comedy Twelfth Night which took place on 19th April. The Shakespeare's tragedies were represented by Hamlet which was played on 23rd April, King Lear played on 25th April, Macbeth 3 days after on 28th April and Othello which took place on 30th April. A fairy tale The Winter's Tale was the ultimate play during the festival and its performance was held on Thursday 4th May.

4.4 The Reception of the Festival in various contemporary periodicals

All of the period reviews that have been researched show that the particular performances during the Festival were sold out and that the festival in general was a huge success. The reviewers, such as Vilém Matthesius and Otokar Fišer praised the head director Kvapil for his effort to make the commemorating festival happen.

According to Otokar Fišer (hereinafter referred to as Fišer), we owe three particular people the realization of the festival. The first one is J. V. Sládek, whose translations of Shakespeare's works are, owing to its maturity and gracefulness, with no doubt one of the best Shakespeare's translations. [100]

The second, no less important person who was very instrumental in the Festival, was the director Jaroslav Kvapil, a director whose lifelong directorial activities were linked rather than with the works of Czech composers, with the works of Shakespeare. Kvapil had for a long time pushed for primarily simplifying and innovating Shakespeare's plays. [101]

Kvapil was given the opportunity to count on the participation of leading Czech tragedian Eduard Vojan during the Shakespearean festival. Without Fišer overlooking the other actors of the National Theatre, he mentions mainly just Vojan who managed to give all of his Shakespearean characters humanity and character. [102]

At the end of the article devoted to the Shakespearean Festival, Fišer briefly comments on the whole event in general and in one word he characterizes as well, as the aforementioned personalities would help us deepen the sense of the poet. "Sládek speaks to our taste, Kvapil to our senses, Vojan to our intellect, Šalda to our culture. To all that at the same time talks Shakespeare, through the most direct and most effective way, he talks to our hearts." (translation mine) [103]

Another significant reviewer Jaroslav Hilbert mentioned in his critique entitled *Několik poznámek po dokončení Shakespearova cyklu* rather negative aspects of Shakespeare's dramas. Hilbert argues that it is not quite true that Shakespeare's work is immortal. According to him, it is not even possible – a steady progress on the perception of Shakespeare had to occur. In addition, his verses are often too long and too descriptive. That is also related to Shakespeare's verbal vagueness – the dramatic content already vanished over the centuries. Thus, Hilbert claims that in theatres increasingly occur situations in which the comic scene is on stage, the audience naively expect a certain culmination of the comic sequence, but instead they are disappointed because the word they were looking forward to, was not nearly as hilarious as they expected. [104]

Furthermore, Hilbert thought of Shakespeare as a very superficial man who appreciated only rich and noble people, and who despised people of low origin. In the play *The Taming of the Shrew* he even despised women when he attempt to tame a woman like a wild beast in the ring. By contrast, the motive of love was not even mentioned in this play. Conversely, rudeness and violence in Shakespeare's other works appear frequently, such as in the plays *Richard III* and *Macbeth*, [105] which are very detailed in murder or fight.

In the closing of the review Hilbert points that the biggest problem of Shakespeare, according to him, is the temporality which even genius' work is not able to withstand. [106]

Jan Bor has quite the opposite opinion of Shakespeare's work. Bor in his review *Shakespeare na české scéně* conversely emphasizes Shakespeare's work as a timeless work, and whose protagonists have been around for centuries perceived as very lively, strong and dramatic. Therefore Shakespeare's characters are, according to Bor, so close to the actors of the National Theatre, who portrayed the characters with absolute grace. [107]

Fifty years later, in 1966 (on the anniversary of 350 years since the death of Shakespeare), Vladimír Müller accurately captured the universal mood of the population in 1916: “Spring 1916 was for us, despite the hardships of war across, the sign of William Shakespeare!” (translation mine) [108]

4.5 Particular reception of the festival by Vilém Mathesius

Vilém Mathesius, one of the most regarded reviewers during the Great War, commented on the festival rather in a negative way than the other critics. He mentioned several arguments in his in-depth critique *Oslavný cyklus shakespearovský na Národním divadle. Několik poznámek*, which was deposited in the Archive of the National Theatre.

In the opening of this article Mathesius admitted that Czechs could be proud of the festival as a whole. Magnitude and sold-out performances, as well as the plays' implementation were highlighted. Great progress had been made since the 19th century and he claimed that there was no need to be afraid of comparing the festival to those abroad. On the other hand the plays that were performed during the festival could have been even improved, because the dramatical thoughts of Shakespeare should have been more distinguished. [109]

Regarding the stage setting it was spectacular – grandiose proprieties and special lighting reflectors were often used to emphasize the importance of particular verses. However, sometimes it seemed too spectacular – Shakespeare's plays have their own distinctive momentum that should be respected. The places of the action often change in a very rapid course and it demands either agility or amendments of the stage setting. Inspiration for the second given option can be found in Germany, where a plain, simple, non-changing stage has been already successfully implemented. The stage setting applied during the Shakespearean Festival gave the impression of being excessively realistic and it left no space for imagination. Shakespeare's drama was supposed to impress by its poetry and dramatic character, not by needless detailed verisimilitude.

On top of everything the intermissions between particular acts were so long that they sometimes lasted even longer than the acts themselves so it eventually caused that it seemed interminable. [110]

In the closing of Mathesius' review a fitting description of Eduard Vojan's acting skills was included: "The greatness of Vojan's mastery is indisputable. During this very cycle of Shakespeare we have become illustratively aware of his amazing reincarnating ability and efficiency of his expression moderation." (translation mine) [111]

On the other hand, Mathesius mentioned some of his shortcomings as well: "One thing seems to me beyond a doubt. Vojan is the kind of actor for whom the acting emerges from art that is concentrated and fully conscious." (translation mine) [112] With this, however, he sometimes finds himself in a conflict with the characters of Shakespeare.

Despite the fact that Mathesius' review is rather critical than complimentary, he still appreciates Kvapil's effort to realize the whole venture as well as he appreciates that it can be audaciously compared to those festivals abroad.

5 CONCLUSION

The objective of the bachelor's thesis was to introduce the Shakespeare Festival at the National Theatre in Prague in 1916. Since the Festival took place during the Great War, the thesis aimed to examine the social and political background in Bohemia and in Europe. The thesis' main focus was to go through several reviews in the period newspapers and research them.

The general aim was to acquaint the readers of this thesis with the times of the Great War, with Shakespeare as the main character of the festival, and with the Festival itself, which was associated with one of the most important personalities of the Czech resistance Jaroslav Kvapil. The Festival was thus often referred to as a manifestation of endeavours to the visibility of cultural maturity of the Czech nation, which was claiming state independence from Austria-Hungary.

The thesis was divided into 5 chapters and several subchapters. After providing the main objectives in the first chapter, the second chapter focused on the description of the events preceding and causing the Great War, putting emphasis on the social and political situation in Bohemia. Several sources were used to achieve the goal of this theoretical part, however, Jaroslav Kvaček's *První světová válka a česká otázka* was the most helpful.

The following chapter, which was partly theoretical and partly practical, was dedicated to Shakespeare and his merit to the world. To understand him better, a brief biography, as well as Shakespeare's four works periods were outlined. In the practical part of this chapter, the lecture Shakespeare's Genius and his work delivered by F.X.Šalda during the ceremonial opening night was further analysed and thereby the very festival followed.

The fourth chapter, which was the practical part of the thesis, dealt with the Shakespeare festival and its reception in period newspapers. Despite the fact that the Festival was supposed to be a major social event of the whole spring 1916, an interesting finding is, that the periodicals did not comment on the festival extensively. The editors had to undoubtedly take into consideration the fact of a strict Austrian censorship, because the Habsburgs justifiably feared a revolution inside the weakened empire.

Due to the fact that the periodicals from the year 1916 deposited in the National Archive are not in a sufficiently good state, they could not be researched. Therefore merely the archives deposited in the Archive of the National Theatre were examined.

Taking into consideration the fact that the year 2014 is the 450th anniversary of Shakespeare's birth, it would be pertinent to elaborate this thesis into a diploma thesis enhanced by further research and new findings.

6 ENDNOTES

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3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid., p. 13
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7. KVAČEK, Robert. *První světová válka a česká otázka*, p. 14
8. ŠEDIVÝ, Ivan. *Češi, české země a velká válka 1914-1918*, p. 17
9. KVAČEK, Robert. *První světová válka a česká otázka*, p. 14
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid., p. 17
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid., p. 20
14. GRUN, Bernard. *The Timetables of History*, p. 444
15. DEMMERLE, Eva. *Das Haus Habsburg*, p. 214 ????? pise se to v originalnim zneni?
16. ROTHENBURG, Gunther. *The Army of Francis Joseph*, p. 141
17. KVAČEK, Robert. *První světová válka a česká otázka*, p. 19
18. Ibid., p. 20
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24. Ibid., p. 29-41
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29. Ibid., p. 260-283
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31. ŠEDIVÝ, Ivan. *Češi, české země a velká válka 1914-1918*, p. 263
32. Ibid., p. 267
33. Ibid., p. 50
34. Ibid., p. 51
35. Ibid.
36. Ibid., p. 56
37. Ibid., p. 57
38. KVAČEK, Robert. *První světová válka a česká otázka*, p. 74
39. Ibid.
40. Ibid., p. 75
41. Ibid.
42. Ibid.

43. ŠEDIVÝ, Ivan. *Češi, české země a velká válka 1914-1918*, p. 172
44. KVAČEK, Robert. *První světová válka a česká otázka*, p. 78
45. Ibid., p. 79-80
46. ŠEDIVÝ, Ivan. *Češi, české země a velká válka 1914-1918*, p. 182
47. Ibid., p. 178-179
48. Ibid., p. 177-190
49. KVAČEK, Robert. *První světová válka a česká otázka*, p. 113
50. Ibid., p. 112-113
51. Ibid.
52. HILSKÝ, Martin. William Shakespeare. Dílo, p. 21-47
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61. Ibid., p. 321-324
62. ENGELMÜLLER, K. *Program – Cyklus shakespearův*.
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66. Ibid.
67. PROCHÁZKA, Martin. *Shakespeare and Czech Resistance*, p. 51

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78. Ibid., p. 7-10
79. Ibid., p. 11-14
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82. Ibid., p. 20
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84. MÜLLER, V. *Shakespeare před půl stoletím*.
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100. FIŠER, O. *Divadlo a hudba. K Shakespearovu cyklu*.
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8 ABSTRACT

This bachelor's thesis provides a complex description of the Shakespearean Festival at the National Theatre in Prague in 1916 and it is focused on the reception of the festival in period reviews.

At the beginning the reader learns basic information about the Great War and what events preceded it as well as about its course in Bohemia. The core of the thesis deals with the personality of Shakespeare, his work and particularly with Shakespeare's theatre tradition in Bohemia. In the ultimate part of the thesis various reviews of the festival are analyzed.

The thesis may contribute to reveal certain relations between Shakespeare, Czech resistance during the Great War and the endeavour for national independence.

9 RESUMÉ

Tato bakalářská práce poskytuje detailní popis Shakespearovského cyklu v Národním divadle v Praze v roce 1916 a je zaměřena na recepci festivalu v dobových recenzích.

V úvodu se čtenář dozví základní informace o první světové válce a jaké události jí předcházely, stejně jako se dozví o jejím průběhu v Čechách. Jádrem práce se zabývá osobností Shakespeara, jeho práci a zejména Shakespearovskou divadelní tradicí v Čechách. V poslední části práce jsou analyzovány různé recenze na festival.

Práce může přispět k odhalení určitých vztahů mezi Shakespearem, českým odbojem za první světové války a snahou o národní nezávislost.

10 APPENDICES

Appendix 1

V pondělí 27. března 1916. 151. hra v předplacení.

CYKLUS SHAKESPEARŮV
o 300. výročí úmrtí básníkovy.

SLAVNOSTNÍ ZAHAJENÍ CYKLU.

Bedřich Smetana: Slavnostní předehra. Dirigent K. Kovařovic.

Genius Shakespearův a jeho tvorba.
Apostrofa kritická. Prosloví F. X. Šalda.

KOMEDIE PLNÁ OMYLŮ
Veselohra o 5 dějstvích. Anglicky napsal William Shakespeare.
Přeložil Jos. V. Sládek.
Režisér Jaroslav Kvapil.

Solinus, vévoda v Efesu	Jiří Steimar
Egeon, kupec ze Syrakus	Miloš Nový
Antifolus, žijící v Efesu	Jaroslav Hurt
Dromio, jeho sluha	Karel Mušek
Antifolus ze Syrakus	Rudolf Deyl
Dromio, jeho sluha	Eugen Viesner
Angelo, zlatník	Karel Kolár
Baltazar, kupec	František Gerlický
Jiný kupec	Vojta Matys
Jiný kupec, věřitel Angelův	Vladimír Merhaut
Štípec, dryáčník	Otto Boleška
Sluha	Karel Váňa
Strážník	Josef Karásek
Adriana, manželka Antifola efeského	Růžena Nasková
Luciana, její sestra	Anna Suchánková
Milostenka	Jarmila Kronbauerova
Abatyše	Terezie Brzková
Lucie, služka Adrianina	Růžena Havelská

Sluhové, kat a jiná družina. Dějištěm Efesus.

Po přednášce přestávka.

Začátek o 7. hod. Konec po půl 10. hod.

The programme of *The Comedy of Errors* (27.3.1916)

Appendix 2



Mucho Ado About Nothing (13.4.1916) – Anna Suchánková, Zdeňka Rydlová. [online] [retrieved 29.4.2014]

Available from: <http://archiv.narodni-divadlo.cz/ArchivniDokumentFotografie.aspx?ad=9830>

Appendix 3



The Winter's Tale (4.5.1916) - Leopolda Dostálová (Hermiona). [online]
[retriever 29.4.2014] Available from: <http://archiv.narodni-divadlo.cz/ArchivniDokumentFotografie.aspx?ad=10876>

Appendix 4

Na jaře 1916, uprostřed první světové války, se dovršovalo 300. výročí Shakespearovy smrti, ale — „ani tato válka všech proti všem nedovedla zamezit, aby evropští národové svorně se nesdružili k oslavě tohoto velkého Evropana,“ jak psaly tenkrát naše noviny.

Především slavila Anglie navzdory nočním náletům německých zepelinů i válečné novince, již právě zaváděli Němci na západní frontě — otravným plynům. Protože podle starého kalendáře zemřel Shakespeare 23. dubna a podle nového 3. května, konaly se slavnosti v rozmezí těch dat. Byly výstavy, chystal se sborník, konala se slavnostní shromáždění i slavnostní představení, sláva byla v Londýně a pak i ve Stratfordu. Lord Grewe zalitoval, že „válka znemožnila, aby oslava byla tím, čím měla být — slavností mezinárodního přátelství“ a herec Harwey si postěžoval, že vlast Shakespearova nemá své národní divadlo, jehož vybudování by stálo sotva desetinu toho, co v Anglii činí denní válečné náklady.

Slavnostního představení v Drury Lane se zúčastnil královský dvůr a po skončení vstoupil do královské lože představitel titulní role „Julia Caesara“ v kostýmu a masce a Jiří V. jej divadelním mečem pasoval: tak se stal slavný shakespearovský herec Frank Benson sirem Frankem Bensonem. Geniovo výročí dalo podnět francouzskému prezidentu Poincaréovi k zaslání gratulačního dopisu anglickému panovníkovi. A král odpovídal přáním, „kéž nesmrtelná díla Shakespearova přispějí, aby úzké přátelství obou zemí bylo provždy zachováno!“

Šlo o spojenectví proti Německu, kde znělo heslo „Bůh potrestej Anglii“ a byly zprvu rozpaky: slavit či neslavit příslušníka nepřátelské velmoci? Na-

MÜLLER, V. Shakespeare před půl stoletím. Praha: Práce, 26.4.1966 –

1.část

Appendix 5

konec zvítězil zdravý rozum. Ve Výmarnu konala Shakespearovská společnost slavnostní schůzi, na níž profesor pražské německé university dr. Brotanek promluvil na téma „Shakespeare a válka“. Dokazoval, že géniova tvorba hlásá prý nezbytnost válek, nikoli arci samoúčelných, a že se vysmívá ideálu — státu bez válek. Proti anglo-francouzskému

Shakespeare před půl stoletím

spojenectví zaměřila některá německá divadla uvedení úryvků z „Jindřicha VI.“, jednajících o upálení Francouzky Jany z Arcu-Panny Orleanské Angličany. V zajateckém táboře v Prusku hráli angličtí zajatci jako za dob Shakespearových i ženské role. Zprávy mluvily i o „německém představení anglické hry ve francouzském městě“, totiž o Shakespearově komedii hrané německým souborem v dobytém městě Lille.

„Pochybnou oslavou“ nazval náš tisk anglické zfilmování „Macbetha“. Filmování platilo za paumění, snižující básnické dílo, a proto bez nadšení byl přijat i záměr amerických producentů, natočit v nádherné výpravě řadu Shakespearových her. Zato s chutí si naše noviny ocitovaly reklamu z Daily Mail, kde pod obrázkem pišícího Shakespeara stálo: „Shakespeare psal brkovým pérem. Co by vytvořil dnes, kdyby mohl psát našim nepřekonatelným plnicím pérem Ideál!“ Jiná zpráva zavání „novinářskou

Appendix 6

"kachnou" a uvádí, že prý kterýsi anglický herec rozřešil důvtipně otázku barvy Othellovy pleti. Hrál jej zprvu jako černocha a na konci byl už jen snědý. A z galerie se ozvalo: „To je tím, že se Othello myje mýdlem Peary, kus za 1 šilink!“ Udělalo to prý reklamu, i když doporučovatele vyvedla policie.

Psalo se o oslavách v Paříži, ve Skandinávii, dokonce i na Islandu, ale také v zemích soustátí Rakouska-Uherska. V Praze Jaroslav Kvapil uchystal patnáctidílný cyklus dramát Shakespearových, jímž Národní divadlo manifestovalo před světem kulturní úroveň národa, domáhajícího se samostatnosti. Ve vídeňském tisku se ozvaly hlasy, které upozorňovaly, že zatímco Národní divadlo slaví okázale, Burgtheater nepřipravil nic. Hradní scéna sice narychlo sestavila menší cyklus, ale odmítla pražský příklad, který neváhala v letáku označit za „provinční“, nemohoucí obstát před náročným publikem. Přesto se zalekla přímého důkazu velikosti umění Národního divadla, když Kvapil nabídl, že provede pro vídeňské Čechy se souborem Národního divadla menší cyklus! Kupodivu se totiž žádná vídeňská scéna neodhodlala propůjčit k tomu své jeviště.

Když jsme na jaře 1864 velkolepou slavností v Novoměstském divadle uctili 300. výročí Shakespearova narození, napsal anonym — nepochybně Neruda — v Hlase: „Čekáme dychtivě zpráv z Anglie, myslíme však již nyní, že ani Velké Británsko neoslavilo krajana svého tak jako malý národ český knížete duchovní říše všem národům společně!“ Po čtyřiceti letech se to dalo opakovat takřka doslova. Jaro 1916 bylo u nás navzdory válečným strastem cele ve znamení Williama Shakespeara!

VLADIMÍR MÜLLER